

CD 2008--94



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Thursday, November 27, 2008
12:10 pm. Walter Hall. Free

Thursdays at Noon

Hommage à Paul Taffanel

September 16, 1844 - November 22, 1908

Leslie Newman, flute
Peter Longworth, piano

→ track 1 & 6 - remarks
8 & 10

PROGRAM

Suite for Flute and Piano, op. 34

Moderato 2
Scherzo 3
Romance 4
Final 5

Charles-Marie Widor
Dedicated to Paul Taffanel

Grande Fantaisie on themes from *Mignon* 7

Paul Taffanel

Meditation from *Thaïs* 9

Jules Massenet
arr. Leslie Newman

Fantaisie on themes from *Der Freischütz* 9 *musique*

Paul Taffanel

NEXT ON THURSDAYS AT NOON

December 4
Songs of the Season - A showcase of graduate voice students



PROGRAM NOTES

Paul Taffanel, the "father of the modern flute", was a towering figure in French musical life. He was brilliantly successful as a solo and orchestral flautist, joining the Opéra-comique at the age of eighteen and later becoming Solo Flute with the Paris Opéra. At the age of forty-five his career gained an added dimension through his appointment as conductor of the Paris Opéra. Three years later he accepted the position of Flute Professor at the Paris Conservatoire, a post which he held until his death. Taffanel is credited with rediscovering and championing the flute music of Bach, Handel and Mozart, reintegrating the flute into the mainstream of chamber music and reestablishing it as a flexible and expressive solo instrument. The evocative character of his playing, and that of his students, directly influenced such composers as Debussy and Ravel to feature the flute in their orchestral works. His legacy as a great teacher survives to this day as almost every flutist can trace his pedagogical roots to Taffanel through either Georges Barrere or Marcel Moyse.

The eminent organist and composer, **Charles Marie Widor** (1844 – 1937), was a colleague of Paul Taffanel at the Paris Conservatoire. His Suite was the first large-scale piece of true musical stature to be written for and dedicated to Taffanel. Lyrical and dramatic, its richly contrapuntal textures are reminiscent of Schumann. The Suite was premiered in 1884 at a concert of the Société des instruments à vent, of which Taffanel was a founding member. Taffanel went on to perform the Suite regularly and, along with Karl Reinecke's "Undine" Sonata (written two years earlier, in 1882) it became one of his favourite recital works.

BIOGRAPHIES

Leslie Newman made her professional debut with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at the age of eighteen, performing Carl Nielsen's Flute Concerto under the baton of Sir Andrew Davis. Since then, she has performed with orchestras throughout Canada, and in the U.S. and U.K. She has appeared in recital in New York, Montreal, Toronto, at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., the Dame Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago, Taipei's National Concert Hall and London's prestigious Wigmore Hall, where her two performances were broadcast live by the BBC's Radio 3. She has toured through Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Europe and the U.S. with Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and, as guest Principal Flautist, has performed with the Hallé Orchestra under Kent Nagano, the Bournemouth Symphony and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Festival appearances include Banff, Bogotá, Salzburg, Sorrento, the Stratford International Flute Festival (UK) and the Oregon Bach Festival. Her performances have been broadcast by radio and television stations in Europe, Canada and the United States.

Leslie lives in Toronto where, in addition to performing regularly as soloist and chamber musician, she is on the flute faculty at the University of Toronto and Royal Conservatory of Music's Glenn Gould School.

Much of **Paul Taffanel's** career was spent guiding the flute away from superficiality and sentimentality, so it is perhaps surprising that his creative output includes at least five opera fantasies. They were relatively early compositions, and by the time he reached the age of forty he had redirected his energies toward more serious forms of composition. Nevertheless, these fantasies, with their sensitivity to context and organically expressive variations, are amongst the finest examples of writing in this genre. Taffanel demonstrates that virtuosity need not equate to exhibitionism, but rather can be an additional and highly effective means of conveying musical intention. Both the *Mignon* and *Freischütz* Fantasies follow the same general structure, beginning with an introduction which sets the musical scene and provides the flute with a brief cadenza. This is followed by a series of themes from the opera, embellished with variations.

Jules Massenet (1842 – 1912) and Paul Taffanel were contemporaries at the Paris Conservatoire where Massenet, as a senior student, gave Taffanel his first harmony lesson. He went on to become one of the most famous opera composers of his time, celebrated for his consummate craftsmanship and innate gift for melody. In 1878, Massenet was appointed Professor of Advanced Composition at the Paris Conservatoire, a post he still held when, some years later, his friend Taffanel became Professor of Flute. The opera, *Thaïs*, was written in 1894. Taffanel conducted its premiere that same year at the Paris Opéra, and so admired the tender beauty of the *Meditation* that he transcribed it for flute.

"**Peter Longworth** is a concert pianist of such power and grace that even the crystal baubles on the chandeliers at Orchestra Hall tingle, dance and resonate when he plays."
Chicago Tribune

Pianist Peter Longworth is a well known and acclaimed solo performer, chamber musician and teacher in Canada and abroad. From his base in Toronto, Mr. Longworth has performed in New York, Chicago, London, Montreal, Nice and other cities in the United States, Canada and Europe. He has been soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic, the World Youth Symphony Orchestra and other orchestras across Canada.

Mr. Longworth is a founding member of the Duke Trio, which has performed in New York and Chicago as well as throughout Canada. He is heard often on CBC National Radio and has a forthcoming CD by the Duke Trio of music by Shostakovich and Copland.

Mr. Longworth is a faculty member of the Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, where he also maintains a private studio. Having given classes throughout North America, he is in demand as a chamber coach and an adjudicator at competitions and festivals.